Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Headteacher Board

21 May 2020

Attendance

Attendance data is published annually on the GOV.UK website.

HTB members who apologised have been consulted on all projects, where available, before the meeting. This excludes items where there were conflicts. Their views are reflected in the discussion at the meeting (where appropriate).

Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) chair

- Andrew Warren (RSC)

Headteacher board (HTB) members

- Kate Brunt (HTB)
- Mike Donoghue (HTB)
- Dame Mo Brennan (HTB)
- Sajid Gulzar (HTB)
- Sir Mark Grundy (HTB)
- Margaret Yates (HTB)

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Sinead Smith (HTB)

DfE senior civil servants

- Bhupinder Bhoday (Deputy Director)
- Dawn Dandy (Deputy Director)
General discussion points

Points discussed in the meeting.

- Temperature check of region including COVID impact and resilience discussion
- Significant changes made between HTB meetings
- Conflicts of Interest

Discussion of projects, including decisions made by RSC with advice from HTB

All decisions are made in reference to relevant legislation and the published criteria.

Trust change

Project: Whether to approve the transfer of Arden Fields, Warwickshire, from South Warwickshire Academy Trust to Macintyre Academies Trust.

HTB discussion:

- Arden Fields is a Special school based in Warwickshire and is part of South Warwickshire Academy Trust who have agreed to transfer one of their schools to MacIntyre Academies, an established MAT operating two Special schools in North Warwickshire.
- Arden Fields was rated 'Inadequate' by Ofsted in 2015, this was pre-academisation and is currently awaiting an Ofsted inspection since becoming an academy in 2018.
- MacIntyre currently consists of three Special schools; it has the capacity to take on Arden Fields and increase pupil numbers.
- Both trusts are happy with the transfer; they have a pre-existing relationship, and SWAT feel that MacIntyre is the right home for Arden Fields.
- Warwickshire Local Authority are supportive of the proposed transfer as SEN provision is limited in the local area.
- MacIntyre and SWAT have been working together and both Trusts are in agreement regarding the transfer of Arden Fields to MacIntyre.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: School and trust to be informed.
Converter academy orders

Project: Whether to issue an Academy Order to King Edward VI College, Sandwell, to convert and become an academy and join Heart of Mercia Multi Academy Trust.

HTB discussion:

- King Edward VI College submitted an application to join The Heart of Mercia MAT as a converter academy, they first made links with Heart of Mercia in April 2019, the Colleges have been working together on a number of projects since. King Edward believes that the two share the same ethos and vision.
- The MAT currently consists of two sixth form colleges, with a further sixth form college approved in principle which was expected to join in April 2020 however has been delayed due to Covid-19.
- King Edward are already participating in improvement work across the MAT as an ‘associate member’.
- When considering the project, the board discussed King Edward’s Educational performance including their Key Stage results, School Improvement and Governance.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: School and MAT to be informed.
**Sponsored route**

Project: Whether to approve an appropriate sponsor for Whitley Academy, Coventry

HTB discussion:

- Whitley Academy is in intervention due to receiving an 'Inadequate' Ofsted judgement in January 2020.
- Finham Park MAT has an established school improvement offer which would benefit Whitley leading to sustained long term improvement.
- There is already an established relationship between both the academy and MAT, with Whitley being accepted as a partner into Finham's Teaching School Alliance in January 2020.
- The interim headteacher at Whitley Academy has been supported daily since Covid-19 closures were initiated. This support has included leadership advice and daily 'MS Teams' meetings with the Executive Headteacher and other MAT Headteachers.
- Finham Park MAT has a central school improvement team, led by the Executive Headteacher. The MAT’s School improvement framework links to Local Authority School to School support networks.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: School and Sponsor to be informed.

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Project: Whether to approve an appropriate sponsor for Cherry Orchard Primary School, Worcestershire.

HTB discussion:

- Cherry Orchard Primary School is located in South Worcester and was judged 'Inadequate' by Ofsted in January 2020, therefore requiring a sponsor match.
- Following an expression of Interest, sponsor options were presented to HTB for discussion and RSC decision.
- Diane Smith from Central RSA has been currently acting as an assisting head at the primary who have been working through recruitment and growth.
- The Rivers C of E MAT has a geographically and demographically similar primary school within 2 miles of Cherry Orchard (St Clements), which can provide PP, SEND and EAL support, and has experience of sponsoring along with the capacity in their growth plan to take on another school.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: Kate Brunt

Further actions required: School and Sponsor to be informed.
Project: Whether to approve an appropriate sponsor for Roman Way First School, Worcestershire

HTB discussion:

- Roman Way First School is a Primary based in Worcestershire that was placed into special measures when it was judged ‘Inadequate’ by Ofsted in December 2019.
- Following an expression of interest, sponsor options were presented to HTB for discussion and RSC decision.
- Roman Way is in Central RSA’s pyramid. With nearly 100% of the school’s children transitioning to Ipsley RSA Academy (middle) and then RSA Academy Arrow Vale (High School).
- Central RSA AT currently has 8 schools: one ‘Outstanding’ and five ‘Good’.
- The Central RSA Academies Trust has two geographical hubs, one in the Black Country and one in the south of Birmingham currently focused on Redditch. The central team is situated in Birmingham 14.3 miles (a 30-minute drive) from Roman Way First School.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: Kate Brunt

Further actions required: School and sponsor to be informed.

**Significant change**

Project: Whether to approve the application of The Rural Enterprise Academy, Staffordshire, to lower the age range by 2 years and remove the sixth form.

HTB discussion:

- The Rural Enterprise Academy (TREA) is a secondary school located in Staffordshire that received an Ofsted judgement of ‘Good’ in May 2018.
- Lowering the age range and removing the sixth form would create an additional 60 Year 7 and 8 school places at the academy, reducing pressure on the Local Authority in its statutory duties to provide places for its students.
- The proposed change will support the long-term sustainability of TREA. The board went on to discuss the finances of TREA in its current position and pupil numbers.
- An attempt was made to launch the sixth form in 2014. However, at its peak the school only had six students completing A Levels. The school stopped trying to recruit students and has had no further admissions since 2017.
- The Academy joined Penk Valley Academy Trust in August 2019. PVAT reviewed the purpose and viability of The Rural Enterprise Academy.
- An SMRA was deployed to the trust but did not report back any risks or issues.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: School to be informed.
Decisions taken between HTB meetings

Project: To approve a retrospective change at Palmers Cross Primary School, Wolverhampton, to add a nursery provision and change its age range from 5-11 to 3-11.

HTB discussion:

- The school added nursery provision in January 2017 and wishes to change its age range from 5-11 to 3-11.
- This retrospective significant change request is from 3 years ago, but the school and Trust were not aware of the significant change process.
- Adding nursery provision to the school has had a positive impact on the attainment of pupils entering reception, and they are able to support families to return to work.
- The LA and trust support the addition of nursery provision.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: School to be informed.
Projects listed on the published draft agenda but were removed before the meeting

List of projects that were on the published agenda but not discussed at the meeting.

- Clarice Cliff Primary School, Stoke – Necessary papers were not ready.
- Birches Head Academy, Stoke – Necessary information was not available.
- Waseley Hills High School, Worcestershire - Changed proposed trust which is not located within WM region.